# Stealing Signals In Feds' League

## Miner Brown Claimed Some Unknown Agency Was Responsible for Inefficiency of His Secret Baseball Service With St. Louis Federal Team



A T top, from left to right —Mike Simon, James Esmond, Otis Crandall. Center, from left to right—Everett Booe, Earl Moseley, W. H. Warren, Frank Rooney, Bennie Kauff, James Esmond. Below — Dee Drake.

BY BILLY MURPHY.

The recent assertion of Miner Brown, manager of the St. Louis Federal League Club, that opponents were stealing the signals of the Terrier team calls attention to this important feature of baseball. The signal code is a larger part of baseball than most fans imagine. No attack or defense can be concentrated or be effective without the aid of a careful system of signals.

A code of signals, which every well regulated ball team uses and guards with great care, plays an important part in the deciding of games.

There is never a ball pitched or any play made in which some sort of a signal is not used. The average fan is well aware of the fact that the catcher signals the pitcher as to what sort of a ball to expect. He must know the curve from the fast one in order to be able to handle it competently, so when he crouches and hides his hand in the palm of the big mitt he is signaling the pitcher what to throw. But the signal system does not end there. The shortstop and second baseman, for instance, when there are men on the bases, always watch the catcher's signs, for the good reason that they learn from them in what direction to expect the ball. For instance, with a left-handed batter up and a man on first base, if the catcher signs for a fast ball the shortstop knows that the batter is more apt to hit into his direction than to right field, consequently the second baseman takes the cue and gets ready to cover the bag in event of an attempted steal. If this system were not practiced many more balls would be hit through territory which one or the other of these infielders had left unguarded to cover the bag.

On some teams the shortstop and second baseman repeat the catcher's sign to the outfield so that he can learn in the direction where the batter is most apt to hit, though this feature of the system of signals is used but seldom.

But there are other angles. Every man on the infield, for instance, has a sign with the catcher. If he sees a chance to catch a base runner napping he signals to the catcher for a throw. The catcher in turn gives the pitcher a signal to keep the ball out of the batter's reach. This is called "wasting," and is done so that the ball is sure not to be hit while the baseman goes to cover his bag, and the catcher is thus given clear way to make his throw. The second baseman and shortstop also have a signal by which the question of which one of the two is to cover the bag with a man on first, and there are a great many catchers who signal the pitcher when to throw to first to catch a runner off the bag.

These are all defensive signals, however, but the code extends into the offensive feature of the game. On a well regulated ball team few batters ever step to the plate with men on the bases without informing these runners what they are attempting to accomplish. If it is the intention to play what is known as the "hit and run game," the batter signals to the runners to start in advance on the next ball pitched, and he then tries to hit the ball through the position which either the shortstop or second baseman has left open upon starting to cover the bag. If he gets the fielder off his balance a ball which is hit barely hard enough to roll past the infield will go into safe territory and be a full fledged base hit, while on a ball so hit the runner is very apt to take two bases.

Under certain conditions the batter notifies the runner that he is going to sacrifice, and again he may inform him to steal, in which event the batter will protect the runner as far as possible by hitting at a waste ball or wide pitch, which the catcher has signaled for in order to make a throw to intercept the runner.

Teams which practice the squeeze play also have a signal for it. The batter tips off the man at third, who starts for the plate with the pitcher's motion and the batter bunts when he can reach the ball.

Those managers who do not allow players to do their own thinking frequently use a system of word signs from the bench or coaching lines. These signals are to convey the manager's wishes as to what the batter or base runner is expected to do. He may want him to hit and run or bunt, and a word is used to tip off the players, which, however, is not intended to attract the attention of the opposing players.

The fewer signs a team uses the better it is off. A complicated system of signals confuses the average player and there have been some of the most successful teams which did not use any signals at all, using their own judgment at all times.

Miner Brown is not in favor of a confusing signal code. He has a certain set which become in vogue during the championship season and is carefully guarded, for if the opposition ever discerns the signals of an opposing team it naturally has a great advantage.

It often happens that, with the bases full or a man on second base in a close game, the shortstop will run behind him to get a throw from the catcher to nail the base runner. This play is worked in the following manner: The shortstop leads the runner a considerable distance from the base by standing close to third, but not so close as to attract suspicion. Then he signals the catcher, who, in turn, calls for a waste ball from the pitcher. As soon as the pitcher gets in motion the shortstop runs to the bag and the catcher throws there. This frequently catches a wise base runner off of his guard and he is retired with apparently ridiculous ease.

In order that the players may become accustomed to one another's hit-and-run signals these are practiced during the entire spring training period. Many signs are used, for if a player used the same one day in and day out it would only be a question of a little time when the opposing catchers would solve them and "cross" the batter as it is termed in baseball.

One of the hundreds of different little things the batter does may mean something. Every time he goes up to the plate with a man on the bases he may do ten different things, any one of which might mean something, but he always covers the real sign by indulging in many for the purpose of deceiving the opposing team.

## HOCKEY IS HIGHEST PAYING PASTIME

That the financial returns to many of the Canadian professional hockey players exceed the sums paid to baseball players, notwithstanding the advent of the Federal League in the baseball world and the princely salaries it is offering to players, is a certainty when one considers the length of the hockey playing season and the number of games in which the hockeyites participate.

In Canada, where hockey is the national winter sport, the professional hockey leagues have the same standard position as the National and American leagues have in the United States, and just as the American youth has aspirations of some day being a big league ball player, so does the Canadian youngster hope some day to shine among the hockey "pros."

It is here that he commands a salary far above that paid in any other line of sport, for it is common among star hockey players to receive as high as $10 a minute for every minute that they are on the ice, as in the case of Fred Jeffries Taylor of Vancouver, Art Ross of the Wanderers, and several other stars.

When it is considered that in a series of fifteen games or thereabouts a salary of $10,000 to $12,000 for a season of ten weeks is paid, it is clearly seen that the remuneration of the winter sport far outshines the highest salaries paid to ball players, whose season runs into several months

## WALTER JOHNSON MORE VALUABLE THAN COBB

We have with us today the ancient but still honorable quiz as to which gentleman is the more valuable to a team—Walter Johnson, the pitching person, or Tyrus Cobb, who does everything but pitch.

The answer is simple: Johnson is far more valuable, despite the wonderful, uncanny, all-round ability of the Georgian.

Cobb, marvelous though he is, is but one cog in a machine of nine cogs. His position as an outfielder forces him to share only a portion of the defensive play. But a pitcher is the main cog—the real cog. Upon him stands the greatest portion of the defense. In fact, every defensive play of the game depends first upon him and his pitching arm.

If a pitcher is going "right" it needs but little offensive work on the part of his teammates to bring home a victory. But if the pitcher foozles, and the opposition begins to batter around his twists and slants, the official scorer usually proceeds to chalk a defeat against the team that owns the wobbling pitcher.

## IS KAVANAUGH'S "PEP" REALLY ON THE LEVEL?

Pep and lots of chatter on the ball field is great if not carried too far. But when a fellow gets to hollering without judgment, just to make a noise, it begins to resemble the w. k. rooster which raises a rumpus every time a hen lays an egg.

Detroit has a youngster who does a raft of talking on the ball field in this fellow Kavanaugh, second-sacker. It would be manifestly unfair to say the lad is one of the type referred to above. But it's hard to believe he really feels as peppery as he talks.

The White Sox were playing at Detroit recently. The Hose were at bat and Kid Gleason had his back turned to the game while quaffing a glass of water. Suddenly he heard Kavanagh come across with a lot of inspiring yells.

Kid turned around and was astonished to find the Sox batter on first. He had reached there on an error by Kavanagh.

"Gee, by the noise that fellow made I thought he had won the ball game," was Gleason's exclamation.

## Pittsburg Went Through One Year Winning 23 Games

There is one record held by the Pittsburg club the least said about the better. Back in 1890, three years after entering the National League, the Smoky City outfit contributed largely to the welfare of its rivals in the way of handing over games, for the records show that the club, under the command of Guy Hecker, went through the campaign that year winning but twenty-three games and registering the remarkable total of 114 defeats, for an average of .168. The "record" never has been equalled by a major league club.

To offset this, however, the club can point with pride to its great run of victories in 1909, the last year it won the pennant, when 110 games were placed in the won column against forty-two reverses.

## There's a Reason Why Bill's Bald

Cleveland fans who saw Bill Burns, Minneapolis twirler, when the Millers played the Spiders, observed the rather bald pate that adorns the veteran twirler's head. But they didn't question Bill about the baldness, as did one of Burns' teammates one day while the squad was riding to the park in a bus.

"How'd you happen to lose your hair so early in life?" queried the teammate.

Burns didn't hesitate.

"Two and three on the batter and the bases full, so often," drawled Bill.

## Slays a Sparrow With Tennis Ball

A. N. Reggio, a well-known tennis player, in an accuracy test of his stroke at the Detroit Longwood courts, took aim at a bird on the greensward 25 feet away, and his well-directed ball killed the sparrow in a flash.

Gardner Beals, with whom Reggio played, subscribed to the fact that nothing he had ever seen in the game went truer to its mark.

## WHEN DELAHANTY BROKE A RECORD

The greatest slugging feat in the history of the game was that of Ed Delahanty, off Adonis Terry, on the West Side grounds in Chicago. The feat is historic, but there are so many inquiries concerning it that it is worth while giving the facts.

It was a game between Philadelphia and Chicago one afternoon in 1896. Terry was pitching in rare form, and, in the language of the game, he "had everything." The first time up Delahanty cracked the ball high over the right field fence, not far inside the foul line—perhaps about 40 feet. The second time he drove a liner over short. Dahlen got his hands on the ball, but it tore through them and rolled clear out to left field. The third time up he lifted the ball over right field fence again, this time far down the right center. The next time he drove the ball out to the clubhouse in center for his third home run. In the ninth inning he came up again. Lange played back between the two clubhouses and the other outfielders retreated to the fences. Delahanty hit the ball straight to center. It struck the top of one clubhouse, bounded to the top of the other and rolled back up the field, and the big fellow made the circuit again.

Yet Philadelphia got only eight hits off Terry in the game, counting Del's five, and was beaten, 8 to 6.

## ENGLISH UNIVERSITIES WANT BOXING CLASSED WITH OTHER COLLEGE SPORTS

Boxers and boxing enthusiasts at Oxford and Cambridge are clamoring for recognition. They want the sport placed on the level with rowing, track and football at the two English universities, and so great is the popularity of the game in England that they seem likely to succeed.

They want intervarsity boxing winners to be accorded a full "Blue," the university colors, which have the same significance as the university monogram in America. Now these winners get but a "Half Blue," the honor carrying about the same value as minor sport emblems in American universities.